

Beaver County Courthouse
Southwest corner of Center St. and First East St.
Beaver
Beaver County
Utah

HABS No. U-61

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PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20240

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

HABS No. U-61 HABS

BEAVER COUNTY COURTHOUSE

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Location: Southwest corner of Center Street and First East,
Beaver, Beaver County, Utah.
Geographic Location Code: 43-0090-001
Latitude: 38° 16' 30" N Longitude: 112° 38' 20" W

Present Owner: Beaver County

Present Occupant: County Offices

Present Use: Court House

Statement of
Significance: This is one of the better preserved and architec-
turally significant original courthouses in the
state, still actively used. Beaver was the seat
of the Second Judicial District Court, which tried
John D. Lee for the Mountain Meadows Massacre
(probably not in this building).

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Original and subsequent owners: Beaver County.
2. Date of erection: 1882.
3. Architect: Unknown.
4. Builder: William Stokes.
5. Alterations and additions: An addition built at the rear, adjoining the main structure is 32' x 29', containing vaults. An addition adjoining the vaults is the county jail, built of pink sandstone. Fire partially destroyed the courthouse in August, 1889, but it was immediately rebuilt with "many improvements".

B. Historical Events and Persons Associated with the Building:

Beaver County was created by the Territorial Legislature in 1855. General management of county business was entrusted to the County Court which consisted of a Probate Judge and three Selectmen, who jointly possessed the power of County Commissioners today. Beaver City was first settled by people from Parowan, Utah.

In 1876, at a special meeting of the Selectmen, a petition was sent to the Governor and Legislature of the Territory of Utah regarding the construction of a county courthouse. (At that time the aggregate county taxes

were \$2500., and the population 6,000). The sum of \$15,000. was budgeted for the structure, which would hold the Second Judicial Court, serving all of southern Utah, and county offices and records. The court was empowered to negotiate bonds for the construction, payable within ten years. The Selectmen who started the project were William J. Cox, M. L. Shepherd, E. H. Blackburn and James Low.

Construction was not completed until June, 1882. It was a three story structure of red brick, with a basement of black igneous rock. The builder was William Stokes, a soldier in the Union Army and one-time United States Marshal of Beaver. The building was finished with a tower equipped with a striking clock facing all four directions. The original cost was approximately \$10,960.00. Fire partially destroyed the building in 1889, but it was immediately rebuilt.

There is some conjecture that the second trial of John D. Lee, one of the leaders of the Mountain Meadows Massacre in September of 1857, was held in this building by the Second Judicial Court. Since the building was not begun until 1876, and the trial was held in December 1876, it is hardly probable that any facilities were ready for the Court.

C. Sources of Information:

Bancroft, Hubert Howe. History of Utah, Bookcraft Inc., Salt Lake City, Utah, 1964.

Daughters of Utah Pioneers. Monuments to Courage, A History of Beaver County, Beaver Press, 1948.

Neff, Andrew Love. History of Utah, 1847-1869, The Deseret News Press, Salt Lake City, 1940.

Prepared by John L. Giusti, AIA
July 25, 1968

PART 11. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: The Beaver County Courthouse exemplifies Victorian pretentiousness in public buildings of the 1880's.
2. Condition of fabric: Good; in use.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Over-all dimensions: A rectangle, 39' x 55', with vault and jail additions at the rear. The original portion is two stories above a high basement: the attic serves as an additional story.
2. Foundations: High; Sandstone; Whitewashed.
3. Wall construction, finish, and color: Red brick. Headers, each ninth course. Three course projecting water table. Sandstone jail addition at rear.
4. Structural system, framing: Masonry, load bearing walls. Wood framed floors and roof.
5. Porches: Front steps have 11 risers and a curved sandstone railing partially plastered over. The front entrance is sheltered by a balcony supported by turned struts.
6. Chimneys: One in west wall terminates a little above cornice and extends as a metal flue.
7. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: 3 panel pair of entrance doors with glass transom with single vertical muntin. Grade and basement doors of little architectural interest.
 - b. Windows and shutters: Elliptically arched window and entrance openings with brick voussoirs and ornamental wood keystones; corbeled brackets. Double hung one-over-one windows. (Old photo shows two-over-two).

8. Roof:

- a. Shape, covering: Steep mansard, green shingled on steep pitch. Standing seam metal deck with low pitch.
- b. Cornice, eaves: Broad cornice conceals gutters; ornamented with bracket modillions.
- c. Dormers, cupolas, towers: Small hipped dormers flank large gabled dormers east and west and tower north. Tower has a clock on three sides in gables surmounted by shingle broach roof transition to octagonal louvered lantern topped by octagonal cone with four bullseye windows and iron weathervane.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans:

- a. Basement: Vertical deep rooms open from a central hall and include a jail cell (no longer used).
 - b. First floor: Offices open to left and right of a central corridor leading past the stair. Early rear additions created and extended vaults.
 - c. Second floor: A square courtroom occupies the front. Behind is the stair landing with steps going up and down. On either side of the landing are offices.
 - d. Attic: Partially finished as small offices.
2. Stairways: Open stair from central first floor corridor has straight run and winders to second floor. Newel is curiously designed; balusters have spiral turning. This stair continued open to attic but is now partitioned at second floor. Newel and baluster design changes at second floor to attic run; winders are similar.
3. Flooring: Wood flooring covered with linoleum.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: Painted plaster; beams of courtroom probably once natural finish - varnished.
5. Doorways and doors: Five panel doors with glass transoms to offices; heavy mitered frames. Vault door.

6. Decorative features and trim: The courtroom ceiling is divided into nine coffers by beams in both directions with acorn pendants at intersections. Beams rest on turned struts coming out of flat pilasters. Two metal pipe columns under the back corners of the tower have metal capitals ornamented with leaves and an ornamental band at eye level. The judges bench has small heavily moulded panels behind heavily ornamented columnar forms which support a sort of cornice which surrounds the counter surface. Windows and doors are framed with fluted pilasters; keystones of the elliptical arches are brackets surmounted by segmental arched pediments. Railings have partially turned balusters and newels with hemispherical bumps on balusters and sides of railing.
7. Lighting, type of fixtures: Modern electric.
8. Heating: Central steam.

D. Site and Surroundings:

1. Orientation: The courthouse faces north to Center Street. First East Street runs along the east side.
2. Landscaping and walks, enclosures: A broad sidewalk runs along the north front of the building, which is close to both streets but far enough to allow a row of trees. To the west is a large lawn. At the rear is a rocked parking area.

Prepared by Paul Goeldner, AIA
Supervisory Architect
Utah Project 1968
July 19, 1968

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PART III. PROJECT INFORMATION

This record is part of a Utah Survey conducted in the summers of 1967 and 1968 under joint sponsorship of the Historic American Buildings Survey, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation, the National Park Service, with the Utah Heritage Foundation.

Field work, historic research, and record drawings were done under the direction of project supervisor Paul Goeldner, AIA(Texas Tech University), assisted by Project Historian John Giusti, AIA(University of Utah). Photographs were made by P. Kent Fairbanks of Salt Lake City.

Student Assistant Architects on the 1967 team were Robert M. Swanson and Charles W. Barrow(University of Texas), and Kenneth L. Lambert and Keith Sorenson(University of Utah). 1968 Student Assistant Architects were Keith Sorenson, Charles D. Harker and Robert Schriever(University of Utah), and Donald G. Prycer(Texas A & M University).